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EXECUTIVE REVIEW

EQUALITY OF STUDENT ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSES AND PROGRAMS

Alberta

EDUCATION
December, 1977

EXECUTIVE REVIEW
EQUALITY OF STUDENT ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSES AND PROGRAMS

WHY THE STUDY?

The study was prompted by three related questions being asked by Alberta educators regarding student opportunity in secondary schools in the province:

- Are the intentions of provincial and school district policy being realized at the school level?
- Is needed information available to students, and how does the role of the guidance counsellor relate to this?
- Is there equality of student access in secondary schools in Alberta?

Focus of the Study

The focus was the **identification of limitations to student access**, rather than a complete picture of all school operations. The authors assumed that procedures fostering better access were in existence.

Major Findings

- In the matter of equality of access to courses and programs, the intention of Alberta provincial policies appears to be primarily "permissive", allowing for a broad range of local autonomy.
- Most decisions on student access to programs and courses are being made locally, at the school district or school level.
- There is considerable variation in the limitations of individual schools.
- The fairly complete provincial decentralization of authority may have led to a situation where schools need more guidance and direction.
- The chief reasons for inequality of access were:
  - Inflexible timetabling and too few courses or course sections, at both smaller and larger schools.
  - Work experience and work study* opportunity and/or information not uniformly available.
  - Course **content information**, objectives, and evaluative criteria, not readily available.

  Despite problem areas, support for existing practices was generally high among the secondary school students, parents and school staff surveyed. On the other hand, both in perception and in practice some constraints were present for significant numbers of students. For example:

  - Options presented an illusion of choice more than a real one. Students in certain programs had little if any choice of subjects, once they had selected a program. Prerequisites appeared as a constraint for others.
  - Unavailability of courses, insufficient enrolment, timetabling conflict, inflexible timetables, school regulations, insufficient information, attendance regulations, excessive fees, and inadequate guidance were other constraints to access as seen by some respondents.

To emphasize this point, "only" 14% of the students suggested more flexible timetabling to improve access. This means that more than 28,000 students seem to have experienced difficulties in access to courses because of inflexible timetabling.

Province-Wide Approach

An important feature of this study is that a **provincial** sample was taken. This means that the province's schools were treated as though they constituted only **one** large school. Absolute uniformity

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*Work experience/study bridges the gap between the world of education and work by providing credits for students wanting to work at specific jobs to investigate career plans while still in school.

was not expected, but the key concern was the extent of variations in practice and the effects of those practices, as seen from the particular vantage points of the knowledgeable people surveyed. Respondents were requested to report on the basis of their own experiences: students for themselves, parents for their children, and school staff in terms of students with whom they had worked.

Random samples of secondary school students (two groups of 1,000 each), parents (1,000), teachers (1,000 including guidence counsellors), and administrators (200) were surveyed by questionnaires in an attempt to determine whether substantial constraints upon student opportunity or upon information availability exist. Approximately 70% of the students and an average of 56% of school staff and parents returned the questionnaires. Some specific questionnaire results follow:

1. Results indicative of **problem areas:**

   (a) Student Access questionnaire statement:
   Students cannot take certain courses because of:
   - *too many students in the course* (62% of the students agreed)
   - *timetabling difficulties* (54% of the students agreed)
   - *insufficient enrollment* (37% of the students agreed)
   - *lack of qualified staff* (34% of the students agreed)
   - *staff ruling* (20% of the students agreed)
   - *program too costly* (15% of the students agreed)

   (b) Student Access questionnaire statement:
   Work experience credits are available to students.
   40% of the students said, "Yes". An average of
   52% of the parents and school staff agreed.

   (c) Student Access questionnaire statement:
   Students may take work study as part of their school course.
   34% of the students said "Yes". An average of
   34% of the parents and school staff agreed.

   (d) Student Information questionnaire statement:
   My parents (guardians) know enough about the course and programs to be able to help me decide.
   53% of the students disagreed or partly disagreed.

   (e) Student Information questionnaire statement:
   My parents (guardians) would like more information about courses and programs.
   73% of the students agreed or partly agreed.

   (f) Student Access "open-ended" question:
   In what areas do you require more information in order to make appropriate course choices?
   22% of the students suggested course and content objectives.

2. Results indicative of **support for existing practices**:

   (a) Student Access questionnaire statement:
   Students may select any program they wish (e.g. matriculation, general business, vocational).
   86% of the students said, "Yes". An average of
   65% of the parents and school staff agreed.

   (b) Student Access questionnaire statement:
   Students may choose from a wide range of required courses and options.
   75% of the students said, "Yes". An average of
   57% of the parents and school staff agreed.

   (c) Student Access questionnaire statement:
   Students obtain sufficient information and assistance in choosing their program of studies.
   86% of the students said, "Yes". An average of
   83% of the parents and school staff agreed.

(d) Student Access questionnaire statement:
Counselling services are readily available to students.
85% of the students said, "Yes". An average of 80% of the parents and school staff agreed.

(e) Student Information questionnaire statement:
I fully understand the requirements for graduation.
86% of the students agreed or partly agreed.

(f) Student Information questionnaire statement:
I fully understand the choices of courses that are available to me at this school.
91% of the students agreed or partly agreed.

Similarities Among Respondent Groups

Given the so-called "generation gap" and "home-school split", it is interesting to note that in this study the similarities among respondent groups far out-weighed the differences:

1. In general, the views of students on most issues was a good indicator of the views of parents; for example, 90% of a set of 72 comparative items were responded to similarly by groups of both students and parents. This is a particularly interesting finding given the fact that in this study, the parents surveyed were not the parents of the comparative group of students.

2. All respondent groups were, in general, similar to a fairly high degree; for example, approximately 70% of 72 comparative items were responded to similarly by the various respondent groups. In other words, there was more agreement than disagreement between the home and school.

Who Conducted The Study?

The original studies upon which this review is based were conducted by Dr. C. Bumbarger and Dr. D. Friesen, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, under contract to Alberta Education. The Planning and Research Branch of Alberta Education is responsible for the review.

Implications of the Study Findings

Provincial Implications:

- Any additional provincial monitoring of equality of student access should be directed towards variations in local practice, to ensure that such practice is consistent with local needs and circumstances, rather than aiming at standardization for its own sake.
- Provincial initiative may be needed to more broadly distribute information and/or opportunity regarding work experience and work study; perhaps additional funding should be made available for local work experience coordinators.
- Provincial initiative may be needed to assure the availability of local program and course guides to all secondary school students in Alberta.

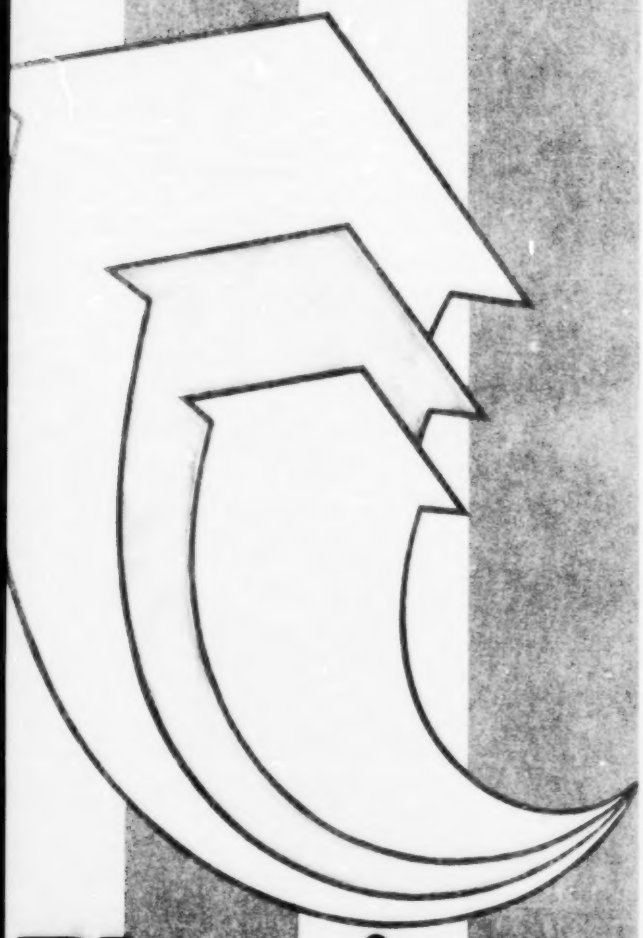
Local Implications:

- Local jurisdictions may need to take steps which will reduce timetabling difficulties and conflicts, and increase availability of popular courses.
- Local jurisdictions (especially rural ones) need to press for more student information/opportunity in the work experience/study area. A handbook for local work experience coordinators is available from Alberta Education, Curriculum Branch.
- All secondary schools in Alberta should ensure that all students, prospective students, and their parents have program and **course content** information booklets available to them prior to the time that students have to make course selection decisions.

Further Specific Questionnaire Results

- Detailed in the 25 page Condensed Report available from:

Planning and Research Branch
Alberta Education
Executive Tower
109 Street and Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
Telephone: (Area Code 403) 427-2991



Planning and Research

Alberta

EQUALITY OF STUDENT ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSES AND PROGRAMS

Prepared by:

Planning and Research Branch
Alberta Education
Executive Building
10105 - 109 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 2V2

Telephone 427-8225

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EQUALITY OF STUDENT ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSES AND PROGRAMS

CONDENSED REPORT

C. Bumbarger and D. Friesen
University of Alberta

Commissioned by
Alberta Education
Planning and Research Branch

December, 1977

EQUALITY OF STUDENT ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSES AND PROGRAMS

CONDENSED REPORT OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT ACCESS AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS STUDIES

-conducted by C. Bumbarger and D. Friesen, The University of Alberta, 1977
-commissioned by Alberta Education, Planning & Research Branch, Executive Tower, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; telephone (area code 403) 427-2991

Why The Study?

The study was prompted by three related questions being asked by Alberta educators regarding student opportunity in secondary schools in the province:

1. To what extent was the intent of policy and regulations at the provincial and school district level being realized in practice at the school level?
2. To what extent was needed information available to students, and to what extent was the function of the school guidance counsellor adequate in this regard?
3. What limitations or constraints to equality of student access existed in secondary schools in Alberta?

Province-Wide Approach

Random samples of secondary school students (two groups of 1,000 each), parents (1,000), teachers (1,000 including guidance counsellors), and administrators (200) were surveyed by questionnaires in an attempt to determine whether substantial constraints upon student opportunity or upon information availability exist. Approximately 70% of the students and an average of 56% of school staff and parents returned the questionnaires.

An important feature is that a provincial sample was taken. This means that the province's schools were treated as though they constituted only one large school. Absolute uniformity was not expected, but the Mkey concern was the extent of variations in practice and in the effects of those practices, as seen from the particular vantage points of the knowledgeables surveyed. Respondents were requested to report on the basis of their own experiences: students for themselves, parents for their children, and school staff in terms of students with whom they had worked.

The assumption was made that a majority of students, parents, teachers, and administrators would not identify a particular constraint. On the contrary, constraints would become apparent through the responses of individuals or groups who had perceived or experienced difficulties with access or information.

Major Findings

1. In the matter of equality of access to courses and programs, the intention of provincial policies appears to be primarily "permissive," with most decisions on student access to programs and courses being made at the school district or school level. In a few cases, Alberta Education has set parameters to limit local discretionary action.
2. The latitude provided to schools in most policy areas has led to considerable variation in the operating constraints employed by schools. The fairly complete decentralization may not have led to the guidance needed by the schools.
3. Some limitations on equality of access were apparent. The major ones were due primarily to either an information shortfall or course unavailability despite information availability:
   (a) Problems inherent in the school setting and its limitations were particularly prevalent in the small schools, although even in the larger schools problems with inflexible timetabling and too few sections of some courses occurred.
   (b) Information and/or opportunity in the area of work experience and work study* credits was not evenly distributed throughout the province.
   (c) In choosing courses and programs, course content information appeared to be lacking for a substantial minority of students and parents.
4. Although respondents reported a number of student access constraints in the initial part of the questionnaire, these were not as strongly identified in a subsequent part:
   (a) For example, a moderate majority of students (54%) initially stated that they could not take certain courses because of timetabling difficulties, but fewer (14%) suggested flexible timetabling as a change needed to improve access to courses.
   (b) A minority of school staff suggested new matters, such as changing the provincial financial grant structure, better meeting individual needs, and lower pupil-teacher ratios as changes needed to improve access.
   (c) Some respondents stated that no changes were needed.

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*Work experience/study bridges the gap between the world of education and work by providing credits for students wanting to work at specific jobs to investigate career plans while still in school.

5. The majority among respondent groups of students, parents, and school staff was generally supportive of existing practice with respect to access to courses and programs. For example, students felt that they could select any program they wished, and that they could choose from a wide range of required courses and options; parents and school staff tended to agree. Students also indicated that they had obtained sufficient information and assistance in choosing their program of studies, and that counselling services were readily available; parents and school staff were in general agreement.

On the other hand both in perception and in practice some constraints were present for significant numbers of students. For example:

a) Options presented an illusion of choice more than a real one. Students in certain programs had little if any choice of subjects once they had selected a program. Prerequisites appeared as a constraint for others.

b) Unavailability of courses, insufficient enrolment, timetabling conflict, inflexible timetables, school regulations, insufficient information, attendance regulations, excessive fees, and inadequate quidance were other constraints to access as seen by some respondents.

To emphasize this point, while "only" 14% of the students suggested more flexible timetabling to improve access, this means that more than 28,000 students seem to have experienced difficulties in access to courses because of inflexible timetabling.

Some Specific Results From The Questionnaires

1. Results indicative of constraints and information inadequacy:

a) Varying proportions of students felt that they could not take certain courses because of:
   (i) too many students in the course (62%); parents agreed (29%);
   (ii) timetabling difficulties (54%); parents agreed (48%);
   (iii) Insufficient enrollment (37%); parents agreed (29%);
   (iv) Unavailability of qualified staff (34%); parents agreed (31%);
   (v) Teacher, counsellor, or administrator ruling (20%); parents agreed (18%);
   (vi) Too costly in terms of locally levied fees (15%); parents agreed (10%);

b) Only 40% of the students felt that work experience credits were available; an average of 52% of the parents and school staff agreed.

c) Only 34% of the students felt that work study could be taken as part of a school course; an average of 34% of the parents and staff agreed.

d) In the student information questionnaire, 53% of the students disagreed or partly disagreed with the following statement: "My parents know enough about the courses and programs to be able to help me to decide."

e) 25% of the students selected "choosing a program" and "time-tabling conflicts" as areas where they encountered difficulties; 26% of the parents agreed.

f) 17% of the students suggested that inflexible timetabling was the most restrictive aspect of their programs; an average of 13% of the parents and staff agreed; as well, in another part of the student access questionnaire, 14% of the students suggested flexible timetabling as a change needed to improve access to courses.

g) 30% of the students suggested that school regulations were the most restrictive aspect; an average of only 6% of the parents and staff agreed, and in another part of the questionnaire, only 3% of the students volunteered school regulations as a change needed to improve access to courses.

h) A substantial minority of students (22%) suggested that course content and objectives was as an area where more information was needed in order to make appropriate course choices. While only 9% of the parents agreed with this assessment, 12% of the administrators, 14% of the counsellors, and 17% of the teachers agreed, and in the student information questionnaire, 89% of the students agreed in whole or in part that parents should know more, and 73% agreed or partly agreed that parents would like more information about courses and programs. As well, 79% of the students agreed or partly agreed with the statement: "I feel that information about courses and programs should be made more readily available to students than it is right now." Finally, 16% of the students agreed or partly agreed with this statement: "Even though I have asked for information about courses and programs, the information was not given to me."

i) 12% of the students suggested post-secondary education as an area where more information was required; an average of 8% of the parents and school staff agreed; in the student information questionnre, 42% of the students agreed or partly agreed with the following statement: "I think that information about further education (beyond high school) is not readily available."

j) 11% of the students suggested careers as an area where more information was required; an average of 11% of the parents and staff agreed.

k) An average of 24% of the school staff suggested that a change in the provincial financial grant structure was needed to improve access to courses; an average of 8% of the students and parents agreed.

l) An average of 18% of the school staff suggested that meeting individual needs was a change needed to improve access; an average of 8% of the students and parents agreed.

m) An average of 12% of the school staff suggested that a lower pupil-teacher ratio was a change needed to improve access; an average of 7% of the students and parents agreed.

n) 13% of the students said that no changes were needed to improve access; 11% of the parents, 8% of the teachers and administrators, and none of the counsellors agreed.

2. Results indicative of <u>student opportunity and information adequacy:</u>

a) 86% of the students felt that they could select any program they wished (eg., matriculation, general, business, vocational); an average of 65% of the parents and school staff agreed.

b) 72% of the students felt that they could choose from a wide range of required courses and options; an average of 57% of the parents and school staff agreed.

c) 64% of the students felt that if their school did not offer a course they could take it by correspondence; an average of 69% of the parents and staff agreed; however, in the student information questionnaire, 82% of the students either agreed or partly agreed with the following statement: "I think more information should be available about correspondence courses."

d) 67% of the students felt they knew the objectives of each course before choosing it; an average of 57% of the parents and staff agreed.

e) 60% of the students felt that they knew the evaluation criteria for each course that they took; an average of 66% of the parents and staff agreed.

f) 86% of the students felt that they obtained sufficient information and assistance in choosing their program of studies; an average of 83% of the parents and staff agreed; in the student information questionnaire, a substantial majority of students either agreed or partly agreed with the following statements:
   (i) "My parents would like more information about courses and programs" (73%); and
   (ii) "I think parents <u>should</u> know more about the courses and programs being offered in schools" (89%).

g) 85% of the students felt that counselling services were readily available; an average of 80% of the parents and staff agreed.

h) 87% of the students felt that they knew the attendance requirements for their school; an average of 85% of the parents and staff agreed.

i) 90% of the students felt that they knew the requirements for a high school diploma; an average of 78% of the parents and staff agreed.

j) In the student information questionnaire, a substantial majority of students agreed or partly agreed with the following statements:
   (i) "I fully understand the choices of courses that are available to me at this school" (91%);
   (ii) "My school provides information pamphlets or a handbook describing courses and/or programs available to me" (72%);
   (iii) "My school encourages students to ask questions about courses and/or programs" (77%); and
   (iv) "I fully understand the requirements for graduation" (86%).

Similarities and Differences Among Respondent Groups

Given the so-called "generation gap" and "home-school split", it is interesting to note that in this study the similarities in experiences among respondent groups far out-weighed the differences:

1. In general, the views of students and parents were similar; for example, 90% of a set of 72 comparative items were responded to similarly by groups of both students and parents. This is a particularly interesting finding given the fact that in this study, the parents surveyed were not the parents of the comparative group of students.
2. All respondent groups were, in general, similar to a fairly high degree; for example, approximately 70% of 72 comparative items were responded to similarly by the various respondent groups; in other words, there was more agreement than disagreement between the home and school.
3. Student-parent differences occurred in only about 10% of the 72 comparative items, and these differences seemed to be fairly predictable. For example, students had more information regarding a technical point about course credits, and student and parent views differed on school dress regulations and on the amount of local fees levied for courses.
4. Home-school differences appeared in approximately 30% of 72 comparative items. The differences were obviously issue specific, and some of them seemed predictable by either the home or school orientation of the respondent, or the position orientation within the school. Some of the areas of difference were: attendance difficulties, amount of local fees, provincial grants, school size, course availability, use of free periods, knowledge of course objectives, home-school communication, inflexible timetabling, school regulations, and marks.

These differences are detailed below:

a) Attendance difficulties: substantial percentages of school staff (34% of the administrators, 41% of the teachers, and 62% of the counsellors) said that students had encountered difficulties with attendance. Only 13% of the students and 8% of the parents agreed. In another part of the questionnaire, this same matter of attendance produced a high degree of consensus: an average of 85% of all respondents agreed that students knew the attendance requirements for their schools.

b) Amount of local fees: of all the items, this one produced the greatest separation among respondents; 86% of the counsellors estimated the total amount of local fees as being $25 or less, but only 59% of the administrators, 52% of the teachers, 34% of the students and 19% of the parents agreed; on the other hand, 51% of the parents estimated that the amount ranged from $26 to $50, while only 35% of the teachers, 30% of the administrators, and 14% of the counsellors agreed; 15% of the parents and 11% of the students estimated the amount at between $51 and $75, while only 7% of the teachers and administrators, and none of the counsellors agreed.

c) Provincial grants: 29% of the counsellors and 26% of the administrators identified provincial grants as a change needed to improve access to courses, while only 16% of the teachers, 9% of the students, and 7% of the parents agreed.

d) School size: 48% of the counsellors, 34% of the administrators, and 21% of the teachers identified smallness of school size as the most restrictive aspect of the school program, but only 6% of the students and 8% of the parents agreed.

e) Availability of programs and courses: 86% of the students felt that they could select any program they wished, but only 55% of the teachers, 57% of the counsellors, and 62% of the administrators agreed; 72% of the students felt that they could choose from a wide range of required courses and options, but only 38% of the counsellors, 58% of the administrators, and 62% of the teachers agreed; 92% of the administrators, 90% of the teachers, and 81% of the counsellors agreed with the statement, "Students have been discouraged from pursuing certain courses on the advice of a teacher, counsellor or an administrator," but only 25% of the students and 19% of the parents agreed; 97% of the administrators, 96% of the teachers, and 95% of the counsellors agreed with the statement, "Students have been encouraged to pursue certain courses on the advice of a teacher, counsellor, or administrator," but only 56% of the student and parents agreed; an average of 31% of the staff identified lack of courses as the most restrictive aspect of the school program, but only 9% of the students and 10% of the parents agreed; 70% of the administrators agreed with the statement, "Students who wish to take a program not available in this school are encouraged to attend another school," but only 31% of the students agreed.

f) Use of free periods: 75% of the students felt that they could use their free periods as they pleased and 70% of the parents agreed, but only 48% of the teachers, 43% of the counsellors, and 31% of the administrators agreed; since none of the respondents identified this as an area of difficulty or restriction, it would appear that in general students tend to use their free periods as they see fit.

g) Knowledge of course objectives: 72% of the parents felt that the students knew the objectives of each course before choosing it and 67% of the students agreed, but only 40% of the teachers agreed with this judgment.

h) Home-school communications: substantially higher proportions of administrators (92%) than parents (62%) or students (50%) felt that the school encourages parents to assist their children in choosing programs and courses; 94% of the administrators indicated that if students are suspended from school, parents would be notified of the suspension by letter, but a lower proportion of parents (68%) and students (58%) agreed; in a separate student questionnaire, 89% of the students agreed or partly agreed with the statement, "I think parents <u>should</u> know more about the courses and programs being offered at the school," and 73% agreed or partly agreed with the statement, "My parents would like more information about courses and programs"; however, only 2% of the parents and teachers suggested home-school communication as an area where changes are needed to improve access to courses.

i) Inflexible timetabling: 17% of the students identified inflexible timetabling as the most restrictive aspect of their program, and 17% of the teachers and 19% of the counsellors agreed, but only 6% of the administrators and 8% of the parents agreed.

j) School regulations: 30% of the students identified this area as the most restrictive aspect of their program, but an average of only 6% of the rest of the respondents agreed with this outlook.

k) Marks: 95% of the counsellors and approximately 81% of the rest of the staff agreed that a student must obtain at least 40% (D) to pass a subject, and 73% of the parents agreed, but only 59% of the students went along with this judgment; 65% of the administrators felt that students know how to appeal a mark but the rest of the staff, students, and parents were not so optimistic, with an average agreement of 50%.

A Note on Guidance Counsellors

As the percentages above show, counsellors are substantially the most pessimistic about course availability (only 38%, as against an average of 65% of the rest of the respondents, see a "wide range" of choice), attendance difficulties (62%, as against 13% of the students, selected this), and school size (48%, as against 6% of the students, felt the school was too small).

Counsellors are substantially the most optimistic about the amount of locally levied fees (86%, as against an average of only 41% of the rest of the respondents, estimated fees at $25 or less), and the value of meeting individual needs (24%, as against an average of 12% of the rest of the respondents, suggested that meeting individual needs was a change needed to improve access to courses).

Study Recommendations

1. Student Access Study:

It appears that action at the provincial level is needed to:

a) Design an overall set of policy statements and distribute these to all the operative levels.

b) Design an adequate information system with separate and complementary roles for all levels of the system.

c) Design a comprehensive monitoring system to determine if the policies and the information systems are producing the desired effects.

2. Student Information Study:

It is recommended that:

a) Principals be asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their own school's information provision activities.

b) Alberta Education reassess its leadership role in information dissemination to students and develop policies to assist in improvement of provincial information provisions.

c) That Alberta Education evaluate the present structures for information delivery and institute changes where needed.

d) That the counsellor's role in information delivery be re-examined, and that changes be made as required.

e) That Alberta Education develop a provincial handbook for secondary school students to provide all information that is of general concern to students.

f) That Alberta Education develop a guide for post-secondary activities (distinct from the handbook) and make this available to secondary school students and their parents. This might build upon the directory to post-secondary education programs produced by Alberta Advanced Education and Manpower.

Appendix:

-Student Access Questionnaire
-Student Access Questionnaire Results (Major Tabulation)
-Student Information Questionnaire Results (Major Tabulation)

ACCESS STUDY

for the

ALBERTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

To the Student:

This study is sponsored by the Alberta Department of Education. Only a portion of all Alberta junior and senior high school students have been selected to furnish information. Therefore, it is **very important that you respond completely, accurately and thoughtfully.**

YOUR COOPERATION IS APPRECIATED

PART A

INSTRUCTIONS

(1) Please provide information about your present programs and courses by answering the following questions.

(2) Circle the best answer to each question. (Circle **only one** answer in each case.)

1. At what grade level are most of your subjects this year? 7 8 9 10 11 12

2. From the choices given, select the one which **best** describes your type of school.
   a. Elementary-Junior High (Grades 1-9)
   b. Junior High (Grades 7-9)
   c. Senior High (Grades 10-12)
   d. Junior High-Senior High (Grades 7-12)
   e. Elementary-Junior High-Senior High (Grades 1-12)

3. What is the approximate size of your school (Grades 7-12 only)?
   a. less than 100 students
   b. more than 100 but less than 300 students
   c. more than 300 but less than 600 students
   d. more than 600 but less than 1000 students
   e. more than 1000 students

4. What do you expect to do after high school?
   a. work
   b. attend technical institute
   c. attend community college
   d. attend university
   e. other

5. In which program pattern are you now? **OR** In which do you plan to be?

   Grades 10-12
   a. business
   b. university entrance (matric.)
   c. vocational
   d. general

   Grades 7-9
   a. business
   b. university entrance (matric.)
   c. vocational
   d. general
   e. undecided

6. Your sex is:
   a. female
   b. male

7. Which of the following best describes the situation for your school:
   a. rural
   b. town
   c. city

8. Which of the following best describes the rating of your performance in school?
   a. much above average
   b. above average
   c. average
   d. somewhat below average
   e. definitely below average

PART B

Draw a circle around one of the three choices following the item to show the answer you have selected.

		Yes	No	Don't Know
1.	I may choose to go to school in either the public or the separate system.	Y	N	?
2.	I may choose to attend any school in my system provided there is sufficient space to accommodate me.	Y	N	?
3.	If I wish to take a program not available in this school, I am encouraged to attend another school.	Y	N	?
4.	I know my school's promotion requirements.	Y	N	?
5.	I repeat only those subjects I have failed.	Y	N	?
6.	I can obtain sufficient information and assistance in choosing my program of studies.	Y	N	?
7.	I know the requirements for a high school Diploma.	Y	N	?
8.	The school encourages my parents to assist me in choosing my programs and courses.	Y	N	?
9.	I can easily obtain career information.	Y	N	?
10.	My courses must be approved by someone at the school.	Y	N	?
11.	I may select any program I wish (e.g. matriculation, general, business, vocational).	Y	N	?
12.	My choice of courses is restricted by the program I select.	Y	N	?
13.	I have had difficulty in taking certain courses because of the way the timetable is set up.	Y	N	?
14.	If my school does not offer a course, I may take it by correspondence.	Y	N	?
15.	I have had difficulty in taking certain courses because of the way the school year is arranged (e.g. semester, ten-month, trimester).	Y	N	?
16.	All correspondence courses must be approved by the principal.	Y	N	?
17.	I am able to receive credit for special projects.	Y	N	?
18.	Work experience credits are available to me.			
19.	I may take work study as part of a school course.	Y	N	?
20.	If I have difficulty with my school work, I may obtain extra help (tutoring) from my teachers.	Y	N	?
21.	I am prevented from participating in extracurricular activities because:			
	(i) I live too far away from school.	Y	N	?
	(ii) I travel by bus.	Y	N	?
	(iii) My marks are too low.	Y	N	?
	(iv) My attendance is poor.	Y	N	?
	(v) My behavior in school has been unsatisfactory.	Y	N	?
22.	My parents encourage me to go on to post-secondary education.	Y	N	?
23.	My parents are **willing** to support me financially if I go on to post-secondary education.	Y	N	?
24.	My parents are **able** to support me financially if I go on to post-secondary education.	Y	N	?
25.	I have been discouraged from pursuing certain courses on the advice of a teacher, counsellor or administrator.	Y	N	?
26.	I have been encouraged to pursue certain courses on the advice of a teacher, counsellor or administrator.	Y	N	?
27.	Counselling services are readily available to me when I need them.	Y	N	?
28.	I may obtain credit for a course and yet not be able to proceed to the next level of the course (because the course requires more than a credit to continue).	Y	N	?
29.	If I were suspended from school, my parents would be notified of the suspension by letter.	Y	N	?
30.	I know what behavior may lead to expulsion from school.	Y	N	?
31.	I generally choose certain courses because:			
	(i) of my preference for a certain teacher.	Y	N	?
	(ii) they are "easy subjects".	Y	N	?
	(iii) my friends have chosen those courses.	Y	N	?
32.	I know the attendance requirements for my school.	Y	N	?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
33. I may not transfer from one school to another without administrative approval.	Y	N	?
34. If my attendance is poor, I may receive fewer credits.	Y	N	?
35. If I have been absent too many times from a course, I may be refused credit for that course.	Y	N	?
36. I am evaluated only on the basis of achievement in school subjects.	Y	N	?
37. I know the objectives of each course before I choose it.	Y	N	?
38. I know how my work will be evaluated in each course that I take.	Y	N	?
39. My school provides programs on study techniques.	Y	N	?
40. I must obtain at least 40% (D) to pass a subject.	Y	N	?
41. The total of my student fees for a school year are (including textbooks, reference books, locker, gym, insurance, pictures, band equipment and rental, etc.):			
$ 0—$ 25 ☐			
$ 26—$ 50 ☐			
$ 51—$ 75 ☐			
$ 76—$100 ☐			
$101—$200 ☐			
Over $200 ☐			
42. I cannot take certain courses because of:			
—Too many students in the course.	Y	N	?
—Insufficient enrolment.	Y	N	?
—Unavailability of qualified staff.	Y	N	?
—Timetabling difficulties.	Y	N	?
—Teacher, counsellor or administrator ruling.	Y	N	?
—Program is too costly.	Y	N	?
43. I may use my free periods as I please.	Y	N	?
44. I cannot make any program or course changes after I have attended two weeks of classes.	Y	N	?
45. My school has a student handbook.	Y	N	?
46. I know how to appeal a mark.	Y	N	?
47. I am aware of awards and scholarships available to me.	Y	N	?
48. If I were suspended from school, I would be allowed to take correspondence courses.	Y	N	?
49. I must wear special "gym clothes" for physical education.	Y	N	?
50. My school has dress regulations.	Y	N	?
51. I may choose from a wide range of required courses and options.	Y	N	?

PART C

1. Please check the area(s) in which you have encountered difficulties. **Please explain.**

Registration ☐
Choosing a Program ☐
Requirements for a Diploma ☐
Post-secondary requirements ☐
Attendance ☐
Admission to school ☐
Appealing marks ☐
Correspondence courses ☐
Credits ☐
Transportation ☐
Marks ☐
Timetabling conflicts ☐
Availability of programs in other schools ☐
School fees ☐
Extra-curricular fees ☐
Other (explain) ☐

2. What do you find most restrictive about your school program?

3. In what areas do you require more information in order to make appropriate course choices? Explain.

4. What changes do you feel should be made to your school's current program to improve access to courses.

5. Are fees for the following compulsory or optional:

For	Compulsory	Optional	No Fees
Courses	☐	☐	☐
Sports	☐	☐	☐
Music	☐	☐	☐
Student Council	☐	☐	☐
Yearbook	☐	☐	☐
Locker	☐	☐	☐
Textbooks	☐	☐	☐
Caution Fees	☐	☐	☐
Lab Fees	☐	☐	☐
Shop Fees	☐	☐	☐
Transportation to School	☐	☐	☐
School Supplies	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for your help.

Table 8-1

Data from Part B of Questionnaire

Policy Item	Response* N=	Parents 535	Students 690	Teachers 508	Administrators 125	Counsellors 21
Students may choose to go to school in either the public or the separate system.	Yes	39	46	47	50	48
	No	56	35	46	47	48
	?	5	16	7	0	5
Students who wish to take a program not available in this schools, are encouraged to attend another school.	Yes	48	31	52	70	57
	No	37	46	33	26	33
	?	13	22	14	2	5
Students may choose to attend any school in their system provided there is sufficient space to accommodate them.	Yes	60	63	63	62	67
	No	34	21	27	33	33
	?	5	15	8	2	0
Students may not transfer from one school to another without administrative approval.	Yes	51	43	58	62	48
	No	20	15	21	34	29
	?	27	39	19	2	14
If a student's attendance is poor, he/she may receive fewer credits.	Yes	47	44	44	43	43
	No	25	32	37	42	43
	?	26	24	15	6	5
Students may use their free periods as they please.	Yes	70	75	48	31	43
	No	22	21	42	50	43
	?	6	3	4	8	5
Students know the attendance requirements for their school.	Yes	80	87	84	94	81
	No	12	9	9	4	5
	?	7	5	6	1	10
Students know our school's promotion requirements.	Yes	63	67	88	96	91
	No	21	15	7	2	0
	?	14	15	4	2	5

*? = "Don't Know"

Table 8-1 (continued)

Policy Item	Response*	Parents	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Counsellors
Students know how to appeal a mark.	Yes	51	47	48	65	52
	No	25	31	28	19	19
	?	23	21	22	11	24
Students know the objectives of each course before choosing it.	Yes	72	67	40	59	57
	No	14	25	34	18	19
	?	12	7	23	18	19
Students know the evaluation criteria for each course that they take.	Yes	64	60	57	73	71
	No	14	30	22	13	5
	?	20	9	19	12	19
Students are evaluated only on the basis of their achievement in school subjects.	Yes	53	41	46	49	33
	No	28	42	46	46	52
	?	17	16	7	2	10
Students obtain sufficient information and assistance in choosing their program of studies.	Yes	81	86	70	91	91
	No	13	8	19	4	5
	?	6	4	9	2	0
Students know the requirements for a high school Diploma.	Yes	85	90	72	80	76
	No	11	8	15	7	0
	?	4	2	12	10	24
Students may select any program they wish (e.g. matriculation, general, business, vocational).	Yes	84	86	55	62	57
	No	13	9	36	28	29
	?	2	5	5	6	5
A student's choice of courses is restricted by the program he/she selects.	Yes	62	46	56	48	48
	No	27	38	31	42	33
	?	10	15	8	3	10
The school encourages parents to assist their children in choosing programs and courses.	Yes	62	50	71	92	71
	No	28	38	15	6	14
	?	10	11	12	1	10

Table 8-1 (continued)

Policy Item	Response*	Parents	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Counsellors
Students may choose from a wide range of required courses and options.	Yes	68	72	62	58	38
	No	25	23	35	35	52
	?	5	4	2	2	5
Students have been discouraged from pursuing certain courses on the advice of a teacher, counsellor or a administrator.	Yes	19	25	90	92	81
	No	71	69	7	6	14
	?	10	5	3	2	5
Students have been encouraged to pursue certain courses on the advice of a teacher, counsellor or administrator.	Yes	56	56	96	97	95
	No	30	39	2	1	0
	?	13	5	2	2	5
A student's courses must be approved by someone at the school.	Yes	74	58	86	83	86
	No	14	28	8	11	5
	?	11	14	5	1	5
Students cannot make any program or course changes after having attended two weeks of classes.	Yes	34	35	22	23	24
	No	35	36	59	66	57
	?	30	28	15	6	14
Counselling services are readily available to students.	Yes	82	85	78	78	81
	No	10	9	16	21	14
	?	7	5	4	1	5
If our school does not offer a course, students may take it by correspondence.	Yes	65	64	68	72	71
	No	12	11	18	19	10
	?	22	24	13	4	14
All correspondence courses must be approved by the principal.	Yes	42	42	48	76	48
	No	11	8	10	14	24
	?	46	49	38	6	24
Work experience credits are available to students.	Yes	56	40	54	47	52
	No	20	9	34	47	43
	?	22	14	8	0	0

Table 8-1 (continued)

Policy Item	Response*	Parents	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Counsellors
Students may take work study as part of their school course.	Yes	38	34	40	30	29
	No	25	23	40	62	62
	?	36	41	17	2	5
Students are able to receive credit for special projects.	Yes	59	67	67	66	67
	No	14	8	21	26	24
	?	26	25	9	4	0
Students must obtain at least 40% (D) to pass a subject.	Yes	73	59	82	81	95
	No	17	34	14	14	0
	?	8	5	3	1	0
Students repeat only those subjects they have failed.	Yes	72	67	44	42	57
	No	15	20	50	55	38
	?	8	11	2	0	0
If a student has been absent too many times from a course, he/she may be refused credit for that course.	Yes	71	69	62	59	48
	No	8	9	23	22	29
	?	19	21	10	6	14
Students may obtain credit for a course and yet not be able to proceed to the next level of the course (because the course requires more than a credit to continue).	Yes	35	60	48	43	33
	No	24	14	25	38	24
	?	39	26	22	9	33
If students are suspended from school, parents would be notified of the suspension by letter.	Yes	68	58	83	94	71
	No	5	12	7	3	10
	?	26	28	9	2	14
Students know what behavior may lead to expulsion from school.	Yes	77	85	82	94	95
	No	11	7	8	2	0
	?	12	7	9	2	5
Students must wear special "gym clothes" for physical education.	Yes	82	89	80	72	67
	No	12	9	14	25	24
	?	5	2	5	1	10

Table 8-1 (continued)

Policy Item	Response*	Parents	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Counsellors
Our school has dress regulations.	Yes	16	25	18	17	14
	No	77	65	78	76	81
	?	6	9	2	2	5
The total of a student's fees (including textbooks, reference books, locker, gym, insurance, pictures, band equipment and rental, etc. for a school year is:	$ 0-25	19	34	52	59	86
	$ 26-50	51	47	35	30	14
	$ 51-75	15	11	7	7	0
	$ 76-100	6	4	2	1	0
	$101-200	4	1	1	1	0
	Over $200	2	1	0	0	0
Students have been prevented from participating in extracurricular activities because:						
(i) They live too far away from school.	Yes	15	21	80	70	81
	No	74	74	17	26	14
	?	1	1	3	4	5
(ii) They travel by bus.	Yes	27	28	80	74	71
	No	62	68	17	23	24
	?	1	1	3	3	5
Students have had difficulty in taking certain courses because of the way the timetable is set up.	Yes	44	36			
	No	46	59			
	?	9	4			
Students have had difficulty in taking certain courses because of the way the school year is arranged (e.g. semester, ten-month, trimester).	Yes	17	14			
	No	76	81			
	?	6	6			
Students cannot take certain courses because of:						
- Too many students in the course.	Yes	43	62			
	No	41	30			
	?	8	5			

Table 8-1 (continued)

Policy Item	Response*	Parents	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Counsellors
- Insufficient enrolment.	Yes	29	37			
	No	44	45			
	?	14	13			
- Unavailability of qualified staff.	Yes	31	34			
	No	42	47			
	?	14	15			
- Timetabling difficulties.	Yes	48	54			
	No	32	33			
	?	10	9			
- Teacher, counsellor or administrator ruling.	Yes	18	20			
	No	53	58			
	?	17	17			
- Program too costly.	Yes	10	15			
	No 62	62	68			
	?	14	13			
Students tend to choose certain courses because:						
(i) of their preference for a certain teacher.	Yes	29	26			
	No	54	68			
	?	9	2			
(ii) they think the courses are easy.	Yes	22	20			
	No	58	73			
	?	9	4			
(iii) their friends have chosen those courses.	Yes	17	14			
	No	62	78			
	?	10	4			

Table 8-2

Data from Part C of Questionnaire

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Difficulties in Each Area

	Parents N = 535	Students N = 690	Teachers N = 508	Administrators N = 125	Counsellors N = 21
Please check the area(s) in which your students have encountered difficulties.					
Registration	6	7	13	5	5
Choosing a program	26	25	31	29	29
Requirements for a Diploma	4	5	7	7	0
Post-secondary requirements	7	10	11	10	24
Attendance	8	13	41	34	62
Admission to school	1	1	2	0	5
Appealing marks	7	10	3	2	0
Correspondence courses	2	5	7	6	0
Credits	4	6	5	4	0

Table 8-2 (continued)

	Parents	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Counsellors
Transportation	5	9	12	10	5
Marks	8	14	15	13	14
Timetabling conflicts	26	25	36	32	14
Availability of programs in other schools	5	4	9	11	19
School fees	2	4	5	6	0
Extra-curricular fees	2	4	4	4	5
Other	4	6	6	2	5

Table 8-3

Data from Part C of Questionnaire

Concerning Restrictions

Restriction	Parents	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Counsellors
School too small	8	6	21	34	48
Lack of courses	10	9	29	30	33
Inflexible time-tabling	8	17	17	6	19
School regulations	4	30	8	6	5
Teacher factor	8	8	5	5	14
Transportation	3	1	1	3	5
Class size	2	3	7	6	0
Lack of sufficient support staff	1	0	1	3	0
Permissiveness	2	1	4	2	0
Prerequisites	1	0	0	1	0

Table 8-4

Data from Part C of Questionnaire

Concerning Information Required

Information Required Regarding	Parents	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Counsellors
Careers	5	11	16	17	5
Courses	9	22	17	12	14
Post-secondary education	8	12	8	10	5
Evaluation of courses	0	0	1	1	5
Orientation, grades 6, 9, & 12	5	8	9	10	10
Correspondence courses	1	0	0	0	0

Table 8-5

Data from Part C of Questionnaire

Concerning Changes Needed

Change Needed	Parents	Students	Teachers	Administrators	Counsellors
Changing grant structure	7	9	16	26	29
Meeting individual needs	7	10	15	14	24
Flexible time-tabling	5	14	11	8	19
Home/school communication	2	2	1	0	5
Professional development training	6	6	5	2	5
Registration	1	3	1	0	0
Option selection	2	6	3	0	0
Evaluation	1	1	1	1	0
Classroom control	0	0	1	0	0
School regulations	3	3	1	1	0
Support staff	2	2	7	4	5
Lower pupil-teacher ratio	4	9	13	14	10
None needed	11	13	8	8	0

Table 17

Percentage Frequencies[1] of Judgments About the Operation and Effects of Existing Information Provisions Within the School

Statements	Judgments				
	Agree	Partly Agree	Partly Disagree	Disagree	No Response
I fully understand the choices of courses that are available to me at this school	58%[2]	33%	7%	3%	0%
My school provides information pamphlets or a handbook describing courses and/or programs available to me	50	22	10	17	1
My school encourages students to ask questions about courses and/or programs	39	38	13	9	2
I fully understand the requirements for graduation	57	29	8	6	1
My parents (guardians) know enough about the courses and programs to be able to help me decide	18	29	24	29	1
My parents (guardians) would like more information about courses and programs	39	34	13	14	1
I think that it would be a good idea to have a province-wide student handbook.	50	23	10	18	0
If there were a province-wide handbook, I would be prepared to pay at least 50¢ for it	51	17	9	23	1
Even though I have asked for information about courses and programs, the information was not given to me	4	12	19	64	1
I feel that information about courses and programs should be made more readily available to students than it is right now	49	30	11	10	1
I think that information about further education (beyond high school) is not readily available	23	29	22	25	2
I think more information should be available about correspondence courses	45	37	10	6	2
I think that information describing how the year's work and/or examinations are weighted (percentages of final mark) should be made available at the beginning of the term	77	17	3	3	1
Information regarding school attendance is outlined clearly at the beginning of the term	59	23	10	7	1
Information about student transfers to different schools during the year is readily available	26	27	22	24	1
I think parents (guardians) *should* know more about the courses and programs being offered in schools	62	27	6	4	1

[1]Rounded to the nearest whole percent, row totals may not exactly equal 100%.

[2]The highest percentage of responses for each item is underlined.